



YAKSHAGANA





YAKSHAGANA



WE GROW WITH CULTURE

SyndicateBank

RELIABLE . RESPONSIVE

'YAKSHAGANA', A publicity brochure on
Yakshagana Ballet- musical plays, published by
Yakshagana Kendra, M.G.M. Campus, Udupi-
576102, Karnataka, INDIA. 1998

Photo Courtesy :

Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra,
Regional Resources Centre
Udupi-576 102.



YAKSHAGANA

Yakshagana is the most famous theatre form of Karnataka. In its concept of total theatre dance, music, dialogue and decor all are harmoniously blended. Yakshagana can lay claim to be equal to any of the better known dance forms of India. However, on account of certain historical factors and geographical limitations being far away from seats of power and huddled in the coastal tract of Karnataka it was the last dance drama style to attract national attention, although its theatre tradition goes back to the 17th century. Not only is it very old but a continuous tradition, because for 400 years it has entertained and instructed the rural masses of Karnataka.

Designed by 'Bolwar'

Typeset by 'Navadurga Lasertech', Udupi-2.

Printed at Manipal Power Press.

In its popular theatre form Yakshagana contains many elements of theatre art which are inherently great. Its gorgeous costumes create a wonder world of fantasy at first sight. Its music possesses a distinct style of its own. Composed by folk poets, these songs are capable of invoking the most delicate as well as vigorous emotions. The virility and vigour of the dance steps and the few set pieces of choreography, are both imaginative and adequate. Dialogues extempore, lengthy at times, thrill the audience and instruct them in the rudiments of Indian Culture, Philosophy and DHARMA.

II. Yakshagana Kendra, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College campus, Udupi (Karnataka) - 576 102 is a national centre for Yakshagana Dance Drama (Bayalata) in the country. It is sponsored by the Central Sangeeth Natak Akademi, New Delhi, the Dept. of Kannada and Culture, Bangalore, Karnataka and the Academy of General Education, Manipal. Housed in a sylvian setting on the outskirts of Udupi in the campus of the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College, the Kendra has a faculty of veterans of Badagutittu Bayalata. Working upto 1998 under the overall guidance of Dr. K. Shivarama Karanth, Kannada litterateur and Yakshagana Researcher, the Kendra has trained more than 300 trainees, who, after completing one year or two years course, have joined professional troupes as junior artistes.

III. Yaksha Ranga is the performing dance ensemble of the Yakshagana Kendra sponsored by the Department of Culture, Human Resources Ministry, Govt. of India, New Delhi. Consisting of experienced professional artistes, Yaksharanga is

organized with a view to introducing Yakshagana as a folk theatre form to connoisseurs outside Karnataka and also abroad.

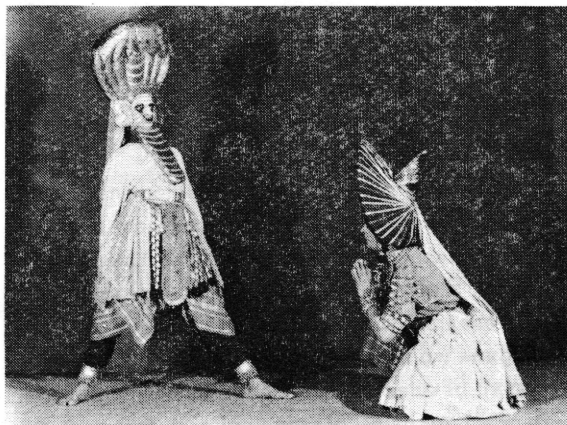
IV. Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth

Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth (1902 - 1997) was a distinguished Indian author writing in Kannada, the language of Karnataka State. A novelist, playwright, essayist, lexicographer, encyclopaedist and educational thinker, Karanth's manifold achievements brought him the coveted Jnan Piitha Literary Award in 1978. Karanth was also an eminent researcher and critic of the Yakshagana theatre. His YAKSHAGANA BAYALATA a pioneering research work on the total theatre of Yakshagana won for him the Sahitya Akademi Award (1958), besides the Bronze Medal of International Dance L'Archives of Stockholm. A fellow of the Sangeetha Nataka Academy, Karanth was the founder of the Yakshagana Kendra at Udupi (1971). A votary of tradition who has done much to preserve it, Karanth was yet not averse to innovation in our traditional theatres. His Yakshagana Ballets which he preferred to call 'Creative extension of tradition' have been performed all over India and abroad (U.K., USSR., TURKEY, ABUDHABI, DUBAI, ITALY, BULGERIA, YUGOSLAVIA, JAPAN, HONG-KONG & SOUTH AMERICA). They helped bring Yakshagana to national and international attention. Today Yakshagana has come to stay even on international stage, thanks largely to Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth.

CHITRANGADA

Yakshagana Ballet

(A musical play by anonymous author of
17th century)



The Visuals

Characters : Arjuna, Vrishaketu, Pradyumna.

Invocation to Lord Ganesha.

Dharmaraja, being troubled by remorse for having slain his kinsmen in the Kuru battle, is thinking of performing a horse sacrifice as penance, according to the advice of Sage Vyasa. Everything is ready for the great sacrifice, but the Chief-guest Sri Krishna, is yet to arrive. He comes in time to bless the event. At his bidding Arjuna and his army set forth to conquer the world, following the trail of the sacrificial horse.

Characters : Pramila and maid servant.

The horse reaches the strange all-women land whose queen is Pramila. She challenges the progress of Arjuna's horse. A battle ensues but

heavens cry halt. Arjuna promptly accepts Pramila as a wife on the advice of the heavenly oracle.

Characters: Sacrificial Horse and Doota. Babhruvahana, Doota, Minister Subuddhi.

At last the horse enters the kingdom of Manipura, ruled by the young prince Babhruvahana who dares to stop the sacrificial steed to the dismay of his queen-mother Chitrangada. Chitrangada is none other than the lovely lady whom Arjuna in days of yore during his travel had courted, married and through her had begotten Babhruvahana. He had never met her afterwards. Owing to an evil curse he had forgotten the event.

Characters : Chitrangada and Dooti.

This creates a most tragic situation. Chitrangada, on learning of her son's deed, tells him to apologise before Arjuna. The prince is in a dilemma. Yet he accepts his mother's advice.

Characters : Babhuravahana, Arjuna and others.

Arjuna spurns him and refuses to accept him as his son or Chitrangada as his spouse. The situation leads to hot words which ultimately end in battle in which Arjuna is slain.

Characters : Uloopi and Chitrangada.

Chitrangada, her son and Uloopi (his foster mother) are all in a miserable state of mind from which there seems to be no escape. It is then that Uloopi asks Babhruvahana to approach Mahasesha, the King of the nether world.

Strange as it may seem Uloopi is the grand daughter of Mahasesha, and she had also been taken as a wife by Arjuna and forgotten.

Dharmaraja is tense with anxiety as he has no news from Arjuna or of the progress of the sacrificial horse. So, he entreats Krishna to find out things.

Characters : Mahashesha and Babhruvahana.

Thus all the persons involved in this tragic drama meet in the ghastly battle field. You find Chitrangada and Uloopi cursing their fate. You find Babhruvahana running post-haste to the place with his great grandfather Mahashesha carrying the life restoring jewel 'Sanjeevani'.

Characters : Mahashesha, Chitrangada, Uloopi, Babhruvahana and Krishna.

Krishna, the chief architect of Mahabharata, also is present. With 'Sanjeevani' Krishna restores to life all the dead, and explains to them the mystery of life's fateful drama.



CAST

PRADYUMNA	— Son of Krishna.
ARJUNA	— Dharmaraja's brother and father of Babhru-vahana
BABHRUVAHANA	— Son of Arjuna and Chitrangada couple.
SUBUDDHI	— Minister of Babhruvahana.
MAHASHESHA	— Serpent King.
KRISHNA	— God incarnate and benefactor of Pandavas.
CHITRANGADA	— Arjuna's wife when he was a mendicant in guise for some time and mother of Babhruvahana.
ULOPI	— One of Arjuna's wives; grand daughter of Mahashesha
PRAMILA	— Queen of Women's Empire in Kerala.
CARAKA	— Servant-attendant.
DUTI	— Maid Servant.

MUSIC

BHAGAVATHA

MADDALE

CHANDE

VIOLIN

SAXOPHONE

Costumes, Choreography & Direction :

Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth

ABHIMANYU VADHA :

Yakshagana Ballet

(A musical play by Devidasa of the 17th century)



The Visuals

Characters : Kaurava, Drona, Shalya, Karna.

Invocation to Lord Ganesha

Duryodhana (Kaurava) is worried with uncertainty about success in the war after Bhishma's defeat. At this point Guru Drona fills him with courage by promising to organize the 'Chakravyoocha'. But it is necessary to see that Arjuna is sent away to another front. So, Duryodhana agrees to contrive this arrangement through his allies the Samsaptakas.

Characters : Shalya and Samsapthaka.

Krishna and Arjuna.

Battle between Arjuna and Samsapthaka.

Characters : Dharmaraja, Abhimanyu.

Dharmaraja grows anxious on hearing the news of Drona's 'Chakra-vyoocha'. He is at a loss regarding the choice of the right warrior to attack the fort. Abhimanyu bursts on the scene and offers to lead the Pandava attack.

Characters : Subhadra, Abhimanyu.

Subhadra, the mother of Abhimanyu, is unable to prevent the young warrior from undertaking this serious adventure.

Characters : Jayadratha, Kaurava, Drona, Karna, Dusshasana, Shalya.

At the entrance to the fort Abhimanyu defeats Jayadratha and gains entry into the same.

Battle between Kaurava and Abhimanyu

Battle between Drona and Abhimanyu

Battle between Abhimanyu and Karna

Battle between Abhimanyu and Dusshasana.

The victorious Abhimanyu is attacked by Karna from behind; though earlier Karna was reluctant to commit this atrocity on the youngster. Abhimanyu is slain in the battle and the killers depart in shame.



CAST

DHARMARAJA	— Eldest of the Pandavas.
ARJUNA	— Dharmaraja's brother and father of Abhimanyu.
ABHIMANYU	— Valiant son of Arjuna by Subhadra.
SUBHADRA	— Arjuna's wife.
KRISHNA	— God incarnate and benefactor of Pandavas.
DURYODHANA	— King of the Kauravas.
DUSSHASANA	— Duryodhana's brother.
KARNA	— Duryodhana's friend.
SHALYA	— Ally of Duryodhana and King of Madhra.
SAMSAPTAKA	— Who as Ally is invited to help Duryodhana.
DRONA	— Teacher to both Pandavas and Kauravas.

MUSIC

BHAGAVATHA
MADDALE
CHANDE
VIOLIN
SAXOPHONE

Costumes, Choreography & Direction
Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth

PANCHAVATI

Yakshagana Ballet

(One of the eight Ramayana plays
composed by an anonymous author
during the late 16th century)



The Visuals

Characters : Rama, Sita, Lakshmana.

Invocation to Lord Ganesha.

The misery that befalls Rama during his banishment is the subject matter of this play. Rama, his brother Lakshmana and wife Sita wander in the forests of Chitrakoota and choose a spot named 'Panchavati' as their house. There they build a hut and intend enjoying a quiet life. But Sita has her own misgivings about the place, as it is known to be infested with many cruel and cunning demons. Rama assures her that no harm shall befall them, as long as he can wield his bow and arrows.

Characters : Soorpanakha - Khara.

To this very forest, King Ravana's sister Surpanakha migrates, along with her brother Khara. She smells the presence of human beings and begins to investigate who those persons are.

Her cannibalistic appetite soars, but once she sees them her blood thirst turns into carnal desire. She is bewitched by Rama's personality.

Characters : Maya Soorpanakha - Rama.

In order to entice him, she turns herself into a charming damsel. This maiden displays all her vileness before Rama. In order to avoid her, Rama tells her that he is a married person and she can go to his brother who is single.

Characters : Maya Soorpanakha, Lakshmana.

She runs up to Lakshmana but no amount of flirtation beguiles him. Her persistence getting on his nerves, Lakshmana asks her to go to his brother and fetch his permission.

Characters : Maya Soorpanakha- Rama.

She goes back and asks for the desired message! Rama scribbles something on her bare back with the point of his arrow.

Characters : Lakshmana - Soorpanakha.

This message is shown to Lakshmana who carries out his brother's order! He had asked him to chop off her nose!

The mutilated demoness Surpanakha is now all rage and vengeance. She vows to bring her brother Ravana, the King of Lanka and get him to punish the miscreants.

Characters : Soorpanakha - Ravana.

She rushes to Ravana in Lanka who is aghast at the sight of his nose-chopped sister. Explaining

how it happened, Surpanakha narrates the foul deed of Rama and Lakshmana to which she was a prey. She also describes to him the beauty of Sita, Rama's charming wife. This induces carnal passion in Ravana's mind, and he takes it as a good excuse for kidnapping her!

Characters : Ravana, Maricha.

For this act he seeks the help of his uncle Maricha. Maricha warns him of dire consequences of such an act, but Ravana does not pay heed.

Characters : Golden Deer - Sita.

He then assumes the garb of a holy mendicant and asks Maricha to become a Golden Deer. Both leave for the Panchavati forest on a nefarious mission.

At Panchavati, the Golden Deer bewitches innocent Sita and an intense desire to possess it goads her to send Rama to catch it. Rama advises her not to be fooled by the ruses of demons of Panchavati. But Sita persists and Rama has no other go but to run after the Golden Deer.

Characters : Golden Deer - Rama.

The Golden Deer entices him for a good distance and Rama realising its ruse, shoots it down. The dying deer seeks the help of Lakshmana, in a voice that sounds like Rama's.

This appeal shakes Sita, who orders Lakshmana to rush to the help of Rama, who seems to be in dire distress. Lakshmana doesn't move, for he has been ordered to guard her, at which Sita turns harsh and uses words that cast aspersion on his motives for not stirring a bit.

Lakshmana, finding no other way, rushes out, only after telling her that she shall not cross the threshold of her hut for any reason.

Characters : Ravana as Mendicant- Sita.

With Lakshmana gone and Sita left alone, the evil minded Ravana appears before the hut in the guise of a mendicant seeking alms. As a matter of duty Sita offers him alms and unwittingly crosses the boundary; Ravana then grabs her and carries her away across the sky.

Characters : Ravana - Sita - Jatayu.

Old Jatayu, the King of Vultures, sees the wicked kidnapper and waylays him. But Jatayu is no match for Ravana, who chops off his wings and Jatayu falls down mutilated. Poor Sita, who witnesses the fallen bird, rushes to him and requests him to hold his breath till he conveys to Rama the news of her abduction.

Characters : Rama - Lakshmana - Jatayu.

The world looks blank to grief-stricken Rama and his brother, who wander through the forest in search of lost Sita. On their way they meet Jatayu, waiting for his last hours. Rama recognises him, as his father's dear friend Jatayu and brother of Sampathi, another dear friend. To the brothers, the dying Jatayu delivers Sita's last message. The two brothers console Jatayu and bless him with Moksha, which means freedom from all future cycles of birth and death.



CAST

RAMA	— Banished son of Dasharatha, King of Ayodhya.
LAKSHMANA	— Rama's brother and companion.
SITA	— Rama's wife, who accompanies him to the forest.
SURPANAKHA	— A demoness, Ravana's sister.
MAYA SURPANAKHA	— Demoness turned damsel.
RAVANA	— Surpnakha's brother.
KHARA	— Surpanakha's brother.
MARICHA	— Ravana's uncle.
SANYASI	— Ravana in mendicant's guise.
GOLDEN DEER	— Maricha in disguise
JATAYU	— Vulture king, who accounts Ravana in flight.

MUSIC

BHAGAVATHA
MADDALE
CHANDE
VIOLIN
SAXOPHONE

Costumes, Choreography & Direction
Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth

THE TALE OF GAYA

Yakshagana Ballet

(A musical play by Devidasa of 17th century)



The Visuals

Invocation to Lord Ganesha.

This tale is one of the very interesting episodes depicted in the Mahabharatha, wherein bosom friends like Krishna and Arjuna fall out and are engaged in a mortal combat. It happens thus:

Characters : Krishna.

One day at the break of dawn Krishna goes to a nearby lake to offer, after his bath, oblations to the Sun God.

Characters : Gaya Gandharva.

Just at this juncture, Gaya, a Gandharva, son of Lord Kubera, happens to ride in the sky above. The foaming sweat of his steed, falls into Krishna's palms while he is offering oblations to the Sun God.

Characters : Gaya - Narada.

This desecration enrages Krishna who swears to chop off the head of the villain, who committed this act, within a week's time. This news is conveyed to Gaya by a heavenly voice. Terror-stricken Gaya doesn't know how to escape this fate. At this juncture sage Narada arrives at the scene and advises him to seek the protection of Arjuna, the only person who can give him succour in a calamity of this nature.

Characters : Gaya - Arjuna.

Gaya runs to the Pandavas, who at this period are living in the Kamyaka forest. He falls at the feet of Arjuna and only after getting a promise of protection from him, gives out the details of the calamity that have befallen him. Pandavas are in a dilemma, for it means enmity with their very benefactor.

Characters : Krishna-Narada- Subhadra.

Krishna who has been on the look out for his adversary, is equally perturbed, for not finding him, though the days of the week are fast slipping. Should he fail to carry out his vow, it amounts to immolating himself in a burning pyre. Lo, Narada is there too, to pass on the news, that Gaya has sought the protection of Arjuna. It is a difficult situation and ultimately Krishna sends his sister Subhadra, Arjuna's wife, to dissuade the Pandavas from protecting an offender. Grief-stricken Subhadra goes to the Pandavas, along with her son Abhimanyu, and begs them not to challenge Krishna, their benefactor. Arjuna consults his brother over such a situation when young Abhimanyu advises his father to stick to the promise he has given to Gaya, prefer death to breaking a given word. So that settles the issue.

Subhadra returns to Dwaraka empty handed. There she begs of Krishna not to carry out his threat, for it means widowhood to her and orphanhood to her son. Seeing this Rukmini rushes in to insult her for her selfishness, for Krishna's death would mean widowhood to thousands of his wives.

Krishna wipes the tears of his dear sister and promises her protection in the name of her parents.

Characters : **Krishna - Balarama.**

The worst has happened, Krishna and Balarama have marched to the battlefield. Dwaraka is in distress. Young Abhimanyu is so enraged that he is on the point of destroying the entire city. Once again comes Narada who comforts the youth, saying that he will bring Shiva himself to settle matters amicably.

Battlefield : At the battlefield Balarama, Krishna, Bhima, Ghatotkacha, Arjuna and others are awaiting the calamity. Arjuna has hidden Gaya in his quiver. Arjuna and Krishna face each other. By then the Sun has set and Krishna seems to have failed to keep his promise. Arjuna mocks at him and points out that he better immolate himself in a fire. Krishna who cunningly has cut off the head of Gaya, points out Gaya's severed head to Arjuna. Arjuna explodes in anger and takes out his mighty bow. But for the sudden appearance of Shiva, with Narada, things would have ended in the greatest tragedy of the world.

Characters : **Ishvara (Shiva).**

Shiva, by restoring Gaya's life, brings sense to the two adversaries-pointing out that Krishna and Arjuna are none other than Narayana and Nara of the past, who are but two faces of the same coin.

CAST

GAYA	— A Gandharva, son of Lord Kubera who incurs the wrath of Krishna.
KRISHNA	— God incarnate, benefactor of Pandavas.
ARJUNA	— A Pandava brother, who gives succour to Gaya, unwittingly.
DHARMARAJA	— Eldest of the Pandavas.
BHIMA	— Second brother among Pandavas.
ABHIMANYU	— Son of Arjuna.
BALARAMA	— Krishna's elder brother.
NARADA	— Sage, who contrives conflict between two friends Krishna and Arjuna.
SUBHADRA	— Arjuna's wife, Krishna's sister.
GHATOTKACHA	— Bhima's son.
ISHWARA	— God Ishwara (Shiva).

MUSIC

BHAGAVATHA
MADDALE
CHANDE
VIOLIN
SAXOPHONE

Costumes, Choreography & Direction
Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth

BHISHMA VIJAYA

Yakshagana Ballet

(A musical play by Halsinahalli
Narasimha Shastri of 19th century)



The Visuals

King Pratapasena of Kashi sends invitation to all the Kings of Bharatha land to an assembly of princes for the purpose of facilitating their bridegrooms to choose from among his three daughters: Amba, Ambika and Ambalika: as, their bride.

King Salva has not been invited but he decides to attend the event.

Also Bhishma of Hastinavati does not get an invitation but he also makes up his mind to attend the contest and to abduct the three daughters of King Pratapasena, if warranted by the situation.

The three sisters are engaged in a water sport in the Ganga and are seen by Salva. Amba falls in

love with Salva and vows to marry him whatever be the outcome of the wedding contest.

The bridal contest turns out to be a battle and Salva is vanquished. All the other warriors gathered there seeking the hands of the girls also surrender to Bhishma who is the unbeaten hero of the contest.

All the three daughters are now the property of Bhishma.

Bhishma takes them to his place and entreats them to marry his brother, revealing his oath taken before his father.

Ambika and Ambalika agree to marry Bhishma's brother but Amba says she is in love with Salva.

Bhishma sends Amba to Salva's place with a Brahmana as an escort.

Salva rejects her saying that she jilted him and Amba wants to wreak vengeance on Bhishma.

She approaches Ekalavya and requests him to teach Bhishma a lesson.

Bhishma defeats Ekalavya in a battle that follows.

Amba decides to perform a severe penance thereby getting power to subdue Bhishma but she abandons the plan on the advice of Hotrvahana who sends her to Parashurama.

Parashurama, Bhishma's teacher, consoles her saying that he will advise Bhishma to accept her.

Bhishma's advice is not received in good spirit and a combat ensues and Parashurama falls into a swoon.

Again a battle rages between Bhishma and Parashurama and this time Bhishma falls unconscious. Goddess Ganga makes Bhishma

regain his consciousness. Goddess Ganga requests Parashurama to retreat but when he refuses she becomes the charioteer and the battle between Bhishma and Parashurama begins once again.

Narada appears on the scene and requests Bhishma to surrender to Guru Parashurama and he does so.

Amba does not tolerate this action, she challenges Bhishma to a battle but Bhishma declines the offer saying he is not going to fight with a woman. Then Amba jumps into fire saying she will take vengeance, if not now, at least in her future birth.



CASTS

BHISHMA	— The great grandfather of the Pandava's and Kauravas.
AMBA	— Daughter of Kashi Raja.
SALVA	— Demon King.
PRATAPASENA	— Kashi Raja.
PARASHURAMA	— Guru of Bhishma.
KIRATA	— Forester.
DOOTA	— Attendant.
BRAHMANA	— Messenger.
HOTRVAHANA	— Attendant of Parashurama.
DRIDHASENA	— King of Vanga.
AMBIKA	— Daughter of Kashi Raja.
NARADA	— Sage.
AMBALIKA	— Daughter of Kashi Raja.
GANGA	— Mother of Bhishma.

MUSIC

BHAGAVATHA
MADDALE
CHANDE
VIOLIN
SAXOPHONE

Costume, Choreography & Direction
Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth

NALA DAMAYANTHI

Yakshagana Ballet

(A musical play by Nagappayya of
Dhwajapura, 18th century)



The Visuals

Characters : **Nala, Damayanti, Chandrasena.**

Invocation to Lord Ganesha.

Shani (Saturn) casts his evil eye on Nala, the emperor of Nishadha, being jealous of his renown. One evening, when it is time to pay homage to the Gods, Nala drinks water to quench his thirst and exposes himself to the evil influence of Shani.

Characters : **Shani, Pushkara.**

Shani, disguises himself as a holy Brahmin, goes to Pushkara, a rival king, to persuade him to invite Nala to a game of dice.

Characters : **Nala, Shani, Pushkara.**

At the game of dice Nala loses all his wealth and kingdom too to his adversary and prepares to go into exile according to the rules of the game. Sending his only son and daughter to Bhimaka, his father-in-law, Nala moves into the forest, followed by his dutiful wife Damayanti.

Characters : **Nala, Damayanti.**

The sufferings of Damayanti in the wilderness of the forest are too much for Nala to bear, and in utter despair he runs away from her.

Characters : **Bahuka, Rituparna.**

In his lonely wanderings Nala comes upon a wild fire consuming a forest. He hears a snake trapped on top of a burning bamboo grove, shout for help. Nala taking pity on it, spreads out a shawl in his arms, for the snake to jump on. While being taken to a safe place the snake bites the ill-fated King. The poison quickly changes his complexion. The fair King of Nishadha is transformed into an ugly, loathsome goblin.

Characters : **Bahuka.**

The change is in a way a blessing in disguise. In this form, assuming the name Bahuka, he gets into the service of Rituparna, the king of Saketa as a keeper of the stable.

Characters : **Damayanti and Kirata.**

Meanwhile a hunter in the forest discovers Damayanti in distress, and takes her to the King and Queen of Chedi, who taking pity on her, employs her as a maid to the crown princess. Damayanti, like Nala, keeps her identity a secret.

One day Rituparna goes to the forest on a hunting expedition with Bahuka and discovers that he is an excellent cook. Bahuka on being asked how

he learnt the culinary art, explains that he learnt it under Nala, the king of Nishadha, who is renowned for his culinary skill.

Characters : **King Bhimaka and Sudeva.**

The old king Bhimaka has to bear the responsibility of finding out the whereabouts of his daughter and son-in-law. He entrusts the task to his priest Sudeva.

Characters : **Sudeva - Chaidya King.**

Sudeva, after many a useless attempt, discovers Damayanti at last in Chaidya's palace. He discloses to the Chaidya queen that Damayanti is her niece. Damayanti is then brought to Bhimaka, her father.

Characters : **Sudeva - Rituparna.**

In another of his missions priest Sudeva finds the culinary expert Bahuka at Rituparna's palace. This news cheers Damayanti who strongly suspects that Bahuka should be her lord in disguise. Devising a plan to draw him out of his hiding Damayanti induces her father to announce her re-marriage to a suitable warrior whom she would herself choose from among the guests. Invitations are accordingly sent to the neighbouring princes and to Rituparna too, who is outraged at the idea of a second marriage of a maid of the warrior class. He determines to punish all those who are guilty of this breach of tradition.

Characters : **Rituparna - Bahuka.**

It is sooner said than done. Kundini, the place where the marriage is to take place, is far off. The time at his disposal is too short, just a quarter day left. Seeing his king in a huff Bahuka offers to drive his chariot at the speed of wind so that he may reach the place of marriage in time. Both set off for Kundini.

Rituparna is amazed at the incredible speed at which Bahuka drives the chariot. He presses Bahuka to tell him who he really is, as no ordinary mortal could drive at this speed.

Bahuka tells the king of his great misfortune owing to the evil influences of Shani. Rituparna teaches Bahuka a spell, the chanting of which would exorcise Shani. When Bahuka chants the spell Shani falls at his feet and pleads for mercy, which is granted. But he is asked to remain with Bahuka for a day longer.

Characters : **Damayanti - Bahuka.**

At the palace of Kundini the wedding guests are duly received, Bahuka and Rituparna being among them. Damayanti gets Bahuka to her palace and accosts him with numerous questions. Nala thinks it is time for him to cast off his disguise and appear before his spouse in his true form.

The happy event brings joy to all.



CAST

NALA	— King of Nishadha, a specialist in horses and culinary arts, who becomes a victim to Shani's wrath.
DAMAYANTI	— Daughter of Bhimaka, and Nala's beloved wife.
SHANI	— Who casts evil eye on Nala.
PUSHKARA	— Shani's tool in inducing Nala to play dice.
BRAHMAN	— Shani in disguise.
KIRATA	— A hunter who helps forsaken Damayanti.
BAHUKA	— Nala turned into a grotesque figure.
RITUPARNA	— King who gives shelter to Bahuka.
BHIMAKA	— Damayanti's father.
SUDEVA	— Bhimaka's counsellor who discovers Nala and Damayanti.

MUSIC

BHAGAVATHA
MADDALE
CHANDE
VIOLIN
SAXOPHONE

Costume, Choreography & Direction
Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth

KANAKANGI

Yakshagana Ballet

(A musical play by Nityananda
Avadhuta of 17th century)



The Visuals

Characters : Subhadra, Krishna.

Invocation to Lord Ganesha.

Kanakangi is Balarama's daughter. Balarama's desire is to give her away in marriage to Lakshanakumara, son of Duryodhana. But according to the custom Kanakangi should marry Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra, Balarama's sister. Subhadra, upset by the stubbornness of Balarama in the matter of marrying off Kanakangi to Lakshana, seeks the intervention of Krishna, the other brother. Krishna advises patience.

Characters : **Balarama, Duryodhana,
Ghatotkacha, Hidimba.**

Balarama goes to Duryodhana on the date fixed for the marriage of Kanakangi and Lakshana. When Subhadra hears of this, she is thoroughly diswrought. On her way there is lurking danger. The guards of Ghatotkacha intercept them. There

follows a fight between Ghatotkacha and Abhimanyu which ends in Abhimanyu's death. By this time Ghatotkacha's mother Hidimba arrives on the scene and comes to know that the slain youth is the son of Arjuna, her husband Bhima's brother and the lady weeping by his side is Arjuna's wife.

Characters : Krishna, Ghatotkacha.

Ghatotkacha, on identifying the people, regrets his hasty action and revives Abhimanyu with his magical power. He brings the son and the mother to Dwaraka. He meets Krishna and agrees to perform a miracle as desired by Krishna.

Characters : Fake Kanakangi, Lakshana, Wedding procession.

Ghatotkacha creates an illusory wedding procession that proceeds from Duryodhana's palace to Balarama's palace. The bride Kanakangi is abducted and in her place a fake Kanakangi is made to go to the wedding ceremony. Unaware of the exchange Balarama gives the fake Kanakangi to Lakshana in marriage. When Duryodhana comes with the real bridegroom Balarama snubs him and sends him back.

Meanwhile the real Kanakangi has joined her kith and kin in Pandava's place. Dharmaraya sends Arjuna to Balarama and Arjuna requests Balarama to give Kanakangi in marriage to Abhimanyu, his son.

Characters : Balarama, Arjuna, Krishna.

When Balarama finds Arjuna in the company of Krishna he realizes that the real culprit behind all this mistaken identity is Krishna. An unpleasant showdown is averted by the timely intervention of Sage Narada, and all ends well, with Kanakangi becoming the consort of Prince Abhimanyu.

CAST

BALARAMA	— Krishna's elder brother.
KRISHNA	— God incarnate, benefactor of Pandavas.
DURYODHANA	— King of Kauravas.
BHIMA	— Second brother among Pandavas.
DHARMARAYA	— Eldest of the Pandavas.
ARJUNA	— Third brother among Pandavas.
LAKSHANAKUMARA	— Son of Duryodhana.
ABHIMANYU	— Son of Arjuna, who fought the battle in his teenage.
GHATOTKACHA	— Bhima's son.
HIDIMBA	— Bhima's wife and Ghatotkacha's mother.
SUBHADRA	— Krishna's sister and Arjuna's wife.
KANAKANGI	— Balarama's daughter.
BHANUMATI	— Duryodhana's wife.

MUSIC

BHAGAVATHA
MADDALE
CHANDE
VIOLIN
SAXOPHONE

Costumes, Choreography & Direction
Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth

DIVINE FANTASY OF THE EAST

We had participated in the training rehearsals of the Yakshagana dancers in the troupe of Dr. K. S. Karanth. This dance is based on the traditional Yakshagana in which many aspects of the ballet technique are utilised. The costumes are, dazzling, and the make up variegated. Further more, the dancer, not having to speak, devotes himself entirely to drawing forth his personality on stage, better than a speaker-dancer could. The musicians are seated behind a curtain very close to the stage. Violins and saxophone blend in a very harmonious and supple way with the music of traditional instruments. The singers relate the story of the play as the dancers execute graceful movements behind a partial screen.

The technique of ballet adopted by the Yaksha-Ranga troupe adds a lot of lightness to the somewhat heavy steps of the traditional Yakshagana.

In this ballet, Dr. Karanth deviates from tradition with the intention of universalising the dance. The dance becomes more concentrated in a highly visual form, and lasts for about two hours. Thus it becomes more comprehensible to a wide cross section of people. It incorporates the occidental aspect of western dance with the divine fantasy of the east. Gradually, Indian dance-drama takes on a new direction in which attempts are made to integrate tradition with a bright new scheme which helps rejuvenate the art.

GINETTEE BOUCHARD

in THEATRALITES Vol. I, 1976

CANADA.

The most important cultural event in India in the year 1982. I will choose the transformation of a rural folk dance-drama "Yakshagana" -from a hitherto unknown form of village entertainment to a major cultural show that has won plaudits in the United States, Europe and the Far East under the guidance of Dr. K. Shivarama Karanth, winner, among other prizes, of the Jnanapith Award for his contribution, not merely to literature but to the resuscitation of a decadent art.

M.V. KAMATH

in SUNDAY OBSERVER

December 29, 1982.

In a lunch hosted by the Indian Ambassador the next day at his residence Mr. Rao said that from reports received by him, Yakshagana plays directed by Dr. Shivarama Karanth embodied as they did the essence of the great Karnataka Art from not only attracted full houses in Bulgaria but drew tears from the eyes of spectators in the final death scene of 'Abhimanyu' choreographed by Dr. Karanth which was yet another proof of the effective manner in which cultural values could be made to transcend national boundaries.

SOFIA
23-9-92.

JAPANESE DANCE CRITICS SOCIETY AWARD, 1981 TO YAKSHAGANA

The performers of "CHHAU" and "YAKSHAGANA" at the "ASIAN TRADITIONAL PERFORMING ARTS 1981" program in recognition of their distinguished achievement and for their presentation of Indian traditional

dance/drama we hereby confer the 13th Dance Critics' Society of Japan Award.

DANCE CRITICS' SOCIETY OF JAPAN

April 14th, 1982.

The Yakshagana of South India included performances of the most famous scenes from Ramayana and Mahabharata by dancers from South Kanara, in Karnataka, who evoked the characters of these ancient epics in simple, sophisticated movements. The performance was full of interest from every angle; the precise, charming leg movements supporting the emotional movements of the upper torso; the exquisite singing of the narrator; the plump figures of the dancers in women's roles; the makeup of the demons.

Slightly different from 'Kathakali', these traditional performances express everywhere in them the warm love of the people for the world of myth and legend; they recall in that regard the world of the Tchaikovsky ballet.

The group that took part in the program truly represented the richness of Indian traditional dance.

-NAGAO KAZUO.

LONDON DAILY TELEGRAPH LAUDS ABHIMANYU

About the India Festival performance given by the Troupe at Riverside Studio, London on 28th evening, the dance critics Fernau Hall wrote as follows:-

The Yakshagana Kendra Troupe of Karnataka in South India, performing "Abhimanyu" last night at

Riverside Studio, as part of the Festival of India, present a rural type of dance drama which has its own simple charm, it shows some affinities with the famous Kathakali dance drama, even though it lacks the highly developed dancing, gestures, and facial expression of this classical form.

The Yakshagana costumes are gorgeously colourful, with great emphasis on gold and red.

"Abhimanyu" presents an episode from the Mahabharata epic. Famous personages such as Krishna and Arjuna appear but they are much less prominent than the young hero Abhimanyu, admirably interpreted by Dayanand Balegar.

His movements are full of youthful zest and he shows a flair for dramatic expression; often he leaps, and he makes these leaps expressive of character and mood.

Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth has done his best to condense the traditional all-night dance drama but, inevitably, there are dull patches, particularly when the characters speak dialogue. His innovative adaption of the ending is quite splendid; the hero is killed, and a beautiful lament is sung as the enemy warriors slowly cradle his dead body and then walk off stage.

YAKSHAGANA

It is remarkable that Yakshagana, one of India's most accessible dance drama forms, has not been seen in London before. Anyone who has enjoyed Kathakali should take to this easily.

Like a theatrical club sandwich, the story proceeds in layers; the narrator sings a couple of verse which the actors dance and mime,.....

The dances themselves are vigorous, involving high leaps and much spinning on the knees. The costumes and doll-like make-ups are dazzling, and there is some expressive music.

In all, this performance by the Yakshagana Kendra is of the highest order, which is fortunate because the 400 year-old form has long been in an advanced state of decay.

But what we are seeing here is the intervention of a brilliant scholar and director, Dr. K. S. Karanth, who has transformed a loose episode from the Mahabharata into a tightly-rehearsed production, yet without it becoming slick or over sophisticated.

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

30, Sept. '82.

AN EVENT IN THE FIELD OF INDIAN BALLET

Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth's "Nala-Damayanti" ballet (Patkar Hall, Sunday), is a new dimension to the age-old Yakshagana bayalata.

In resurrecting and modernising it, Karanth must have given a lot of thought to present-day needs. He has done away with old crudities. Gone is also the extempore dialogue by the characters which used to hamper their BHAVA and NRITYA. Yakshagana is not just a spectacle. BHAVA is a vital aspect. Those far removed from the stage might have missed the emotion depicted by the artistes. Each one of them did a wonderful job. Karanth's Nala-Damayanti is an event in the field of Indian ballet.

TIMES OF INDIA
26-1-1976.

Administration

Academy of General Education, Manipal:

Dr. K. Mohandas Pai, *President*; Sri K. K. Pai, *Registrar*; Dr. Ramdas M. Pai, *Secretary*.

M. G. M. College Trust:

Dr. K. Mohandas Pai, *President*; Sri K. K. Pai, *Correspondent*; Dr. A. Krishna Rao, *Member*; Prof. K. S. Haridasa Bhat, *Member*; Sri T. Mohandas Pai, *Member*; Dr. H. Shantharam, *Member*; Prof. S. Daniel, *Principal/Secretary*.

Executive Committee : Yakshagana Kendra:

Prof. K. S. Haridasa Bhat, *Director*; Dr. K. Mohandas Pai, *Member*; Sri K. Prabhakar Pai, *Member*; Prof. S. Daniel, *Member*; Prof. H. Krishna Bhat, *Hon. Secretary*.

Contact Address:

SECRETARY
Yakshagana Kendra
MGM Campus, UDUPI - 576 102
Karnataka, India
Phone: 08252 - 21159 (O), 21119 (R)
Fax: 08252 - 23559



WE GROW WITH CULTURE

SyndicateBank

RELIABLE . RESPONSIVE